



Holybrook Parish Council

Serving the communities of Beansheaf Farm and Fords Farm

Council Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting	18 th January 2021
Location	Zoom Virtual Meeting
Present	Cllrs. Bedwell (Chair), Baker, Collard, Croal, Lenaghan, Littlewood, H. Mistry, S. Mistry, Oloko, Somner and Tull. Also present: Pam Kirkpatrick (Clerk) and Caroline Lenaghan (Administration Assistant),
Circulation	All Council and Ward Members

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the Regulations”) came into force on the 4 April 2020. The Regulations remove the legal obligation to hold local authority meetings at a specified physical location, by permitting members and others attending the meeting to do so by way of ‘remote attendance’. The obligation to hold an Annual Meeting was also removed.

All virtual meetings held by the Parish Council before 7th May 2021 (NOTE: the date could be brought forward if the Government rules are relaxed) are enabled by this legislative change. This Protocol applies to meetings of the Council and/or its Committees, that would, but for the coronavirus pandemic and the Regulations, be held in public. All other Standing Orders remain in place.

No.	Notes	Action
135/20/21	Open forum for members of the public Mr Dempsey attended to observe the function of the Parish Council with a view to becoming a councillor.	
136/20/21	Apologies for absence None.	
137/20/21	Declarations of Interest relevant to the Agenda Cllr Somner (non-pecuniary) – items: 6: District Councillors’ Report, 7: West Berkshire Council Consultations: Regulation 18 Consultation on the Emerging Draft of the Est Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037 and Proposed Submission Minerals and Waste Local Plan, 8: Planning (new applications), 9: Other Planning 13: Footpath 4/1. 19:34 ENTER CLLR CROAL	
138/20/21	Approval and adoption of the minutes of: a) Full Council meeting on Monday 14 th December 2020. APPROVED. Proposed by Cllr Tull and seconded by Cllr Somner; b) Extraordinary Meeting on Monday 4 th January 2021. APPROVED. Proposed by Cllr Collard and seconded by Cllr Littlewood.	
139/20/21	Matters arising from the Minutes None.	

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140/20/21	<p>District Councillors' report</p> <p>Cllr Somner provided a verbal report which members acknowledged. (Appendix 1).</p> <p>A general concern was raised with potential future issues with recycling as it is believed that the vast amount of on-line ordering will continue beyond the current pandemic.</p>																					
141/20/21	<p>West Berkshire Council Consultations</p> <p>a) Members AGREED that the Clerk respond on behalf of the Council to the Regulation 18 Consultation on the Emerging Draft of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037 noting the following points: combination of spatial areas and that the Linear Park is not mentioned and should be protected;</p> <p>b) Members AGREED no comments to be submitted on the Proposed Submission Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP).</p>	PK																				
142/20/21	<p>New Planning Applications</p> <p>a) RATIFIED. NO OBJECTION to the following applications:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="252 788 1513 1720"> <thead> <tr> <th>Planning no.</th> <th>Applicant</th> <th>Address</th> <th>Proposal</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>20/02946/HOUSE</td> <td>Mr & Mrs Coston</td> <td>14 Hanbury Drive, Calcot</td> <td>Remove existing conservatory and add single storey rear extension part garage conversion to habitable accommodation.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20/02979/HOUSE *as adjacent Parish</td> <td>Mr & Mrs Caswell</td> <td>3 Sandown Avenue, Calcot</td> <td>To erect a prefabricated concrete garage with brick effect cladding which will be the same/nearest colour of existing house. The garage will have a Pent style roof with white up and over door/windows/fascia/gutters and downpipes as per the existing house.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20/02958/HOUSE</td> <td>Mr & Mrs J Shah</td> <td>10 Ballamoore Close, Calcot</td> <td>Erection of part single and part two storey side extension and porch.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20/03030/HOUSE</td> <td>Mr M K Akrum</td> <td>1 Bath Road, Calcot</td> <td>Two storey front addition to form entrance lobby, staircase and galleried landing at first floor. Demolish part of existing double garage and conversion of remaining garage to habitable accommodation. Two storey rear and part side extension to form kitchen and family area on ground floor with two additional bedrooms over. Create and construct a new comprehensive roof design to the altered/extended building with loft storage area for non-habitable use. Carry out internal alterations as required to support the new layout of rooms.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>b) Members acknowledged the planning appeal and remain in support of the original application: APP/W0340/D/20/3261927 – Mayberry, Mill Lane, RG31 7RS (Section 73A - Application for variation of Condition (4) of planning permission 03/02590/HOUSE - Relaxation of a condition relating to planning application number 143454 for the removal and lopping of Leylandii trees).</p>	Planning no.	Applicant	Address	Proposal	20/02946/HOUSE	Mr & Mrs Coston	14 Hanbury Drive, Calcot	Remove existing conservatory and add single storey rear extension part garage conversion to habitable accommodation.	20/02979/HOUSE *as adjacent Parish	Mr & Mrs Caswell	3 Sandown Avenue, Calcot	To erect a prefabricated concrete garage with brick effect cladding which will be the same/nearest colour of existing house. The garage will have a Pent style roof with white up and over door/windows/fascia/gutters and downpipes as per the existing house.	20/02958/HOUSE	Mr & Mrs J Shah	10 Ballamoore Close, Calcot	Erection of part single and part two storey side extension and porch.	20/03030/HOUSE	Mr M K Akrum	1 Bath Road, Calcot	Two storey front addition to form entrance lobby, staircase and galleried landing at first floor. Demolish part of existing double garage and conversion of remaining garage to habitable accommodation. Two storey rear and part side extension to form kitchen and family area on ground floor with two additional bedrooms over. Create and construct a new comprehensive roof design to the altered/extended building with loft storage area for non-habitable use. Carry out internal alterations as required to support the new layout of rooms.	
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143/20/21	<p>West Berkshire Council Planning decisions</p> <p>Members acknowledged the following:</p> <p>20/02558/HOUSE - 28 Cambrian Way, Calcot, RG31 7DD: Erection of single storey rear extension and, garage conversion and new entrance door. GRANTED.</p> <p>20/02355/FULD – West Mews, Mill Lane, Calcot RG31 7RS: Building of 1 pair of semi-detached houses. GRANTED.</p>	
144/20/21	<p>Variation of Club Premises Certificate under the Licensing Act 2003</p> <p>Members had NO OBJECTIONS to the Off Sales request from an existing licensed Clubhouse Bar and Halfway Hut: Calcot Park Golf Club, Calcot.</p>	
145/20/21	<p>Financial Information</p> <p>a) Payments – Members APPROVED the payment of items listed on payment sheet 09-2020/21</p> <p>Please note that the payment sheet will issued by post to the Finance Committee Chairman following the meeting for signing.</p> <p>b) Members acknowledged that:</p> <p>i) The Parish Council received a WBC Members’ Bid award to the sum of £1,357.91 to help recover some of the cost of expenses incurred to make the Parish playgrounds and Beansheaf Centre ‘Covid secure’;</p> <p>ii) The Parish Council received a WBC Members’ Bid award to the sum of £4,325.62 towards the Beansheaf Centre kitchen refurbishment works;</p> <p>iii) The bid for Parish VAS’s was submitted to WBC on Friday 8th January 2021. The bidding process ends on 10th January 2021. A decision is awaited.</p> <p>c) Beansheaf Centre Kitchen – Final decisions:</p> <p>i) Members APPROVED a quotation to complete the repair of the kitchen shutter to the sum of £441.80 plus vat;</p> <p>ii) Cllr Lenaghan proposed that the full sum (£4,680 + VAT) be paid for the kitchen worktops following a quotation error by the kitchen company. However, Members AGREED by majority vote that the kitchen worktops will be paid for in full less the total costs of the shutter repairs (£4,135.71 + VAT).</p> <p>d) Budget (Members were provided a copy of income/expenditure to end December 2020 and budget figures): Members AGREED the final budget costs acknowledging that the additional, potential, cost of insuring the VAS’s would be £110/y. Based on the 5-year fixed term insurance renewal quotation (£4,815.87) members further AGREED that the insurance budget did not require adjustment. However, minor increases were APPROVED for postage, water and public relations/newsletter. Clerk will accept 5-year insurance quotation from Zurich.</p> <p>AGREED: A Precept demand of £124,467 for the year 2021/22 will be submitted to WBC. This is an increase of 0.76% from 2020/21 meaning that the charge to a Band D rated property will be £48.20 for the year.</p>	

No.	Notes	Action
146/20/21	<p>Clerk's Report</p> <p>Members acknowledged a verbal report from the Clerk. The main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to the third national lockdown, the Beansheaf Centre, once again can only be open to essential services (pre-school, NHS services and formal education). Therefore, income will be impacted; - The situation with the increased water charges is on-going. Members AGREED that Mr Tull be asked to complete a meter reading to assist the Clerk; - The footpath audit is slowly underway. To date, not much of significance had been noted although the Wardens have been asked to edge some verges, sweep back moss, cut back some overgrown foliage etc and several incidences of fly-tipping have been reported to WBC. <p>Members advised the Clerk of a few items to be investigated/actioned: Insurance claim for loss of earnings from Covid-19 following High Court ruling, level of litter along the Bellway Development site (Mill Lane), fence cut open at derelict site of the Best Western Hotel, land ownership of old bus terminus (Mill Lane).</p> <p>Members APPROVED the provisional council meeting dates for 2021/22.</p>	<p>CT</p> <p>PK</p>
147/20/21	<p>Footpath Holybrook 4/1</p> <p>A verbal update was provided advising that footpath 4/1 had been re-opened by the landowner and the 'diverted' route closed. The ground is currently laid to grass and the footpath is 1.5m wide (within the legal limits). A request has been made to the landowner for this footpath be widened to enable social distancing. Members were asked to monitor the surface and report back any concerns.</p>	ALL
148/20/21	<p>Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG)</p> <p>The NAG meeting scheduled to take place on 14th January 2021 was cancelled due to lack of membership. An article will be placed in the newsletter requesting more volunteers.</p> <p>A police report was provided which members noted.</p>	
149/20/21	<p>Chairman's Remarks</p> <p>Members were advised that Cllr Sarju Mistry will be stepping down from his role as a councillor after the April 2021 meeting for personal reasons. The Chairman expressed regret that he would be leaving and thanked him sincerely for his commitment and contribution to the work of the Council.</p>	
	There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21:03	

Signed: Dated:

Minutes prepared by	Pam Kirkpatrick, Clerk
Minutes dated	20 th January 2021



Parish Council Report for December 2020

Cllrs Argyle and Somner

(West Berkshire Council, Tilehurst South & Holybrook Ward)

Annual Review

Alongside this month's report is a review of 2020 from a WBC perspective by Lynne Doherty, the Leader of Council.

Meetings

Council

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for 2 March 2021 which will see the setting of the Council's budget for 2021/22 (more about this below).

Links to all agendas and public meeting papers are here, and all WBC public meetings are broadcast live on YouTube and recorded so that they can be viewed at leisure - [West Berkshire Council YouTube Channel](#). Guidance for anyone attending a remote public meeting (eg a parish representative at a planning committee) is here.

Executive

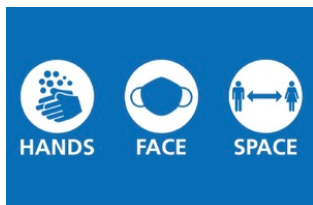
The Executive met for the final time this year on 17 December (a recording of the meeting can be viewed on the YouTube channel referenced above) and considered a number of papers including the London Road redevelopment, a revised Housing Allocations Policy, and financial and general performance.

The next meeting of the Executive is scheduled for 14 January 2020. Items coming forward are expected to include new draft Leisure and Cultural Heritage Strategies.

Covid-19

Tier 4

Last month's report noted a general disappointment that West Berkshire had not returned to Tier 1. To quote the March report "A month is a very short time in a pandemic" (and let's also recall February's report: "There have been no cases of coronavirus in West Berkshire at the time of writing. Planning is underway for any eventuality")!



As everyone will know, we are now in Tier 4 and a new strain of the virus has emerged in the South East, thought to be up to 70% more infectious than the previous strain. All of the indicators have been on an upward trajectory for some while – for example (with the caveat that all snapshots are only that), the West Berkshire rolling weekly rate of confirmed cases per 100,000 population was 68.2 on 24 November and 335.8 on 24 December.

The guidance is here, but in general terms the move to Tier 4 means:

- Residents must stay at home, apart from limited exemptions (but support and childcare bubbles can still continue);
- Non-essential retail, indoor gyms and leisure facilities, and personal care services must close;
- People must work from home if they can, but may travel to work if this is not possible (for example in the construction and manufacturing sectors);
- People should not enter or leave Tier 4 areas, and Tier 4 residents must not stay overnight away from home;
- Individuals can only meet one person from another household in an outdoor public space;

- Those in Tier 4 areas will not be permitted to travel abroad apart from limited exceptions, such as for work purposes.

Vaccinations

It will be appreciated that the mechanics of Coronavirus vaccination are in the hands of the NHS, whether via hospitals and acute settings, Primary Care Networks, or individual surgeries (more about the Pfizer vaccine below). Care Home staff in West Berkshire are being prioritised for vaccinations, which started before Christmas - WBC's Adult Social Care team is working with relevant partners, including colleagues in the NHS and Public Health, to ensure that prioritised employees from council and private care homes are vaccinated as quickly as possible.

Local data

Local information about the daily reported cases in the district (and across Berkshire) can be accessed from Berkshire Public Health website.

Community Support Hub

Our support hub can be contacted on 01635 503579 if needed.

Local Outbreak Engagement Board

The Local Outbreak Engagement Board meets on alternate weeks in private and in public. Thus, each fortnight, there is a live broadcast meeting to update residents of the current activities relating to Covid-19 in and around the district (and beyond). Public meetings are available on the Council's YouTube channel and further information about the Board can be found here.

Coronavirus information on the WBC website

The Council keeps up to date information for residents and businesses on the website.

Winter Hardship Grant Scheme

A reminder that support continues to be available for residents who are in need of help with food, utility bills and other essentials. The £279k Covid Winter Grant Scheme offers one-off payments and has already paid out 525 grants totalling £136k. The scheme also includes Free School Meal vouchers to eligible five to 16 year-olds for both the Christmas and February half-term holidays. For more information and to apply to the scheme go here.

Financial Support for Businesses

WBC is distributing a series of Government grants to hospitality businesses which have been still limited in how they may operate (and WBC has developed a new streamlined application process to ensure that businesses are more easily able to understand which grants they are eligible for and so that the Business Rates Team can process payments as quickly as possible):

- The Additional Restrictions Grant to eligible businesses which may or may not have had to close but which can demonstrate significant hardship as a result of local or national restrictions;
- The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) for businesses which were forced to close as part of the national restrictions from 5 November to 1 December;
- The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) for hospitality and leisure businesses which were able to open from 2 to 19 December but whose income is likely to be significantly impacted by the current restrictions;
- The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) for businesses which were required to close under Tier 2 restrictions from 2 to 19 December - this category will include pubs which do not serve food;
- The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) for businesses which have been forced to close as a result of West Berkshire's move to Tier 3 on 19 December;
- A flat rate Christmas Support Grant of £1k to pubs that can demonstrate that 50% or more of their income derives from the sale of alcoholic beverages. This grant will be match funded by WBC with a further £1k from council Covid funds to provide additional targeted support.

This funding is in addition to (i) the almost £30m of funding distributed to almost 2,200 local businesses earlier this year, (ii) the application of £38.4m worth business rate relief to 1,200 local premises, and (iii) a universal rates holiday to every local business, regardless of industry, in March and April.

2021/22 Budget

Local Government Financial Settlement

The draft 2021/22 announcements were delivered in a speech by the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP in the Commons on 17 December. We have yet to find out exactly what this means for West Berkshire, but budget preparation is underway (which must inevitably be based on a number of assumptions until final confirmation is received on the financial settlement post consultation).

The consultation upon the draft settlement runs until 16 January 2021.

Council Budget Simulator

The Council has to balance its budget and save a further £7.3m. If you fancy having a go at the Budget Challenge you can find the link to the budget simulator here.

£500k Community Infrastructure Levy fund open for bids (closes 10 January)

WBC has opened the application process for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) grants of between £10k and £100k for use towards local infrastructure projects to be implemented by 31 March 2022. The guidance and application form are available here and the bid application closing date is 17:00 on 10 January 2021.

The successful bids will be funded from £500k set aside for this purpose from CIL received by WBC and will be on top of the 15% (or 25% if there is an NDP) of CIL that already goes to parish and town councils.

The bidding process is open to community groups and other infrastructure providers/partners in West Berkshire, ward members, town and parish councils, and organisations that wish to deliver infrastructure that will benefit the residents and businesses of the area.

The proposed schemes must deliver the infrastructure requirements of the West Berkshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan and meet the needs of the adopted Local Plan. In addition the proposals must demonstrate how the projects will fit with the Council Strategy and the Covid-19 Recovery Strategy. The final bids will be proposed to Executive to be included as part of the 2021-22 budget.

Draft Local Plan Review 2020 - 2037

Members of the public are invited to have their say on the emerging draft version of the Local Plan Review 2020-37. The eight week public consultation period commenced on 11 December will close on Friday 5 February 2021. Residents, partners and other key stakeholders can read the draft Local Plan Review and provide feedback on the Council's Local Plan Consultation Portal.

The emerging draft Local Plan Review sets out the vision that West Berkshire will be a welcoming place for business, provide residents with sufficient housing, and facilitate well-designed and sustainable development.

The draft plan looks at future levels of need for new homes, employment and other land uses along with the associated infrastructure requirements. In line with published government policy, the Local Plan Review includes the requirements for new market, affordable and specialist housing, as well as Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

The draft proposal extends the existing Local Plan from 2026 to 2037 to accommodate new housing needs as well as adopt environmentally-friendly development measures. This includes new policies for contributing to the health and wellbeing of residents, minimising the demand for energy, and protecting the water environment.

The draft plan also takes into account the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019, and seeks to have the majority of development in places that reduce car dependency. In addition, the plan proposes policies that seek to make the fullest contribution towards transitioning to a low carbon society.

The plan also proposes working with partners to conserve and enhance the district's heritage, local distinctive character of towns and villages, and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The draft supports the council's 2019-23 strategies for developing local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy, as well as to maintain a green district. The plan also incorporates findings from reviews and consultations held since 2018.

One particular aspect of the draft that has changed since the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) is that the Grazeley Garden Settlement does not form part of the draft Local Plan - it did form part of the HELAA, but that did not translate into inclusion as a site within the draft Plan (more about this below). Indeed the draft makes explicit reference to the adverse impact of the AWE Aldermaston and (revised) AWE Burghfield Detailed Emergency Planning Zones (DEPZs) on development generally: *"In the interests of public safety, residential development in the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) of AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield is likely to be refused planning permission by the Council, especially when the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has advised against that development"*.

Leisure and Culture

Libraries

The new Tier 4 restrictions for managing Covid-19 mean that West Berkshire Libraries buildings will have to close again except for allowing limited computer use by appointment only.

Although library members will not be allowed to visit a library to choose books, they will still be able to reserve books via the online library catalogue and pick them up from any West Berkshire library, including the Mobile Library.

The libraries will also continue to offer the popular Order & Collect service where members who are not sure which book they would like to read can request that library staff select up to five books for them, possibly introducing them to new authors. Customers can telephone their local library to let staff know what sort of books they enjoy or visit the library catalogue online to place their order.

Library members are advised to please check library opening times before making a trip to collect the books they have ordered. Details of all current library opening hours, together with the Mobile Library timetable and closures for the Christmas / New Year period, can be found on the website.

Customers who need access to library computers for essential use will be able to do so for up to 30 minutes per day by appointment only.

Christmas Appeals

A big thank you to the people of West Berkshire for helping WBC to wrap up Christmas for those in need. Due to Covid, the campaign which has often been Council staff-centric went online. This enabled even more of our residents to get involved and show their care and compassion for those in our communities who have had an especially difficult year.

We were delighted by the generosity, variety and thoughtful Christmas presents gifted for our Community Santa and Giving Tree recipients - several hundred gifts were received, sorted, wrapped and distributed across the district.

Health & Wellbeing Strategy Consultation

WBC works in close partnership with the NHS, voluntary sector and others to form the health 'system' in the district. Working together with the neighbouring local authorities of Reading and Wokingham a joint health and wellbeing strategy has been formulated for the next five to ten years, and the partnership is now engaging with residents to ensure that the strategy and subsequent plans fully encompass their needs and wishes, and begin to address inequalities in health and life-expectancy.

An engagement campaign has been launched, including an online survey supported by many focus group consultations. All local councils and community groups are invited to participate here - the survey is live until mid-January.

Communications Channels

As well as Twitter there are also a number of Facebook pages which the Council uses, for example:

- West Berkshire Council;
- West Berkshire Community Support Hub Group;
- West Berkshire Libraries.

The WBC website also contains more about the CSH and useful information for residents and businesses:

Residents <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/coronavirus-residents>

Business <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/coronavirus-business>

Community hub <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/coronavirus-communityhub>

Broadcast meetings [West Berkshire Council YouTube Channel](#)

Linked to all of these initiatives is the WBC Customer Service telephone line: 01635 551111.

Other Matters

The Pfizer Vaccine

The issues with the storage and handling of the Pfizer vaccine have been widely reported and the following - extracted from a note by a Governor of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust - might be of interest in highlighting quite what a rigmarole it is.

“While volunteering at our local surgery during the first

three days of Covid vaccinations, I became aware of the considerable complexity of the preparation of the Pfizer vaccine preparation and the time constraints that this imposes on the throughput rates. It is far more complex and time consuming than the current flu jabs.

“In essence, the preparation process has a number of stages which need to take into account that each vial contains enough vaccine for five doses, that each dose then needs to be diluted with saline and most importantly that the vaccine is fragile and can be degraded by light, by time and by rough handling.

“It typically takes a well-trained team three minutes of very careful and precise work in aseptic conditions to produce five doses resulting in a maximum rate of administration of 60 doses per hour per team. The failure to handle the vaccine very gently during preparation and to keep it in the dark whilst being brought up to

room temperature may well render the dose only partially effective. In three days we managed to do nearly 1000 vaccinations in about 17 hours largely between 11 am and 5pm whilst still keeping morning surgery in operation. The second booster vaccination will similarly take another 17 hours for the same cohort from Jan 5th to 7th. At any given time, in addition to traffic management, there were approximately 20 volunteers (involving nearly all PPG members) and staff working to register patients from 4 different practices (outside in gazebos) and to conduct them, in groups of 5 at a time, though the vaccination process and into the 15 minute observation area as well as a team of some 10 to 12 nurses doctors and pharmacists working inside the surgery preparing and administering the vaccine.

“This has major implications for care home residents as the vaccine needs to be administered very close to the aseptic room where it is prepared in order to minimise degradation arising from handling and time duration during transportation. Rightly or wrongly, I am concerned that political pressure to speed up the process or to deskill it will backfire and end up wasting huge sums of money if it results in vaccine being injected in sub-optimal condition. I believe that the Pfizer vaccine costs the NHS about £15 per dose compared to the Oxford vaccine at about £3 and is in limited supply. We can’t afford to waste it.

“As a footnote, the requirement to observe patients for 15 minutes added an additional layer of complexity and significantly limits the choice of sites where the vaccine can be delivered. A very large room in an adjacent sheltered living facility with 15 socially distanced disinfectable chairs just about allowed us to cope with 60 patients per hour. By filtering out all patients with significant allergies we did not experience a single reaction from any of the nearly 1000 frail elderly patients that we vaccinated during this observation period.”

The AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine is awaited with interest!

Grazeley Garden Settlement

As mentioned above, the Grazeley project is not part of the draft WBC Local Plan currently out to consultation.

It is still within the Wokingham Borough draft Local Plan but quite recently the Defence Nuclear Organisation (part of the MoD) has formally objected to its inclusion given that the site is wholly within the revised AWE Burghfield DEPZ.

The Leader of Wokingham Borough Council and the Portfolio Holder dealing with their draft Local Plan have thus recently gone on record as follows:

“Earlier this year we consulted on a draft local plan strategy which proposed a garden town at Grazeley at its heart which included upfront infrastructure, strong public transport links and a truly long term contribution to meeting development requirements.

“Since then a legislative change has caused emergency planning requirements around the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Burghfield to be extended so that they for the first time include the Grazeley area. The Defence Nuclear Organisation, part of the Ministry of Defence, is now objecting to the Grazeley garden town proposal and is requesting its removal from the local plan.

“In light of the changed circumstances, we have started the process of looking at alternatives as the Grazeley garden town may no longer be achievable. We will consult on these matters when we know more.”

More recently, this from the Wokingham Portfolio Holder in response to a question raised:

“A recommendation on an alternative planning strategy will be reported to a meeting of the council’s Executive where approval to hold a consultation will be requested. Formal consultation will then be undertaken. Given the evidential requirements, it is anticipated that the report will be considered by Executive in the summer 2021. A formal change to the Local Development Scheme will be made in due course.”

Latest police officer recruitment figures

According to a recent Thames Valley Police bulletin, by the end of September TVP had recruited a total of 260 new police officers (against a target of 183 by the end of March 2021).